

But you should know that over 40 more States are well on their way to expanding their own insurance programs. I applaud the Governors for their commitment and their innovative efforts to enroll more children. And I thank Ray Scheppach from the Governors' Association for being here today. We can't rest until every State has a program and a commitment to implement it.

Finally, the private sector has to help us get the job done. Many businesses and foundations have already joined in. Bell Atlantic will provide the leadership to establish a new 800 number that will direct families to State agencies in charge of Medicaid. Safeway has agreed to put the 800 number on their shopping bags. The National Association of Chain Drug Stores and the National Community Pharmacists Association will help us get the word out whenever parents pick up prescriptions. Pampers has agreed to include a letter in parent education packages that go to millions of new mothers in the hospital. I thank all of them for being exemplary corporate citizens.

And I'm pleased to announce the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Kaiser Family Foundation have committed more than \$23 million to finding better ways to expand coverage and outreach efforts. America's Promise, the outgrowth of the Presidents' Summit on Service, made a healthy future for all children one of its five goals. And along with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Hospital Association, the National Association of Education, all have launched their own efforts to target and enroll uninsured children. And I thank them.

This is an extraordinary partnership to make sure that every child gets the health coverage he or she needs to have a fair and healthy shot at life. But it is only the first step. We need every parent, every grandparent, doctor, nurse, health care provider, teacher, business leader, foundation, every community all across America to work until they find the ways to reach all our children who can be covered by Medicaid or by the new children's health insurance program.

Like all parents, Hillary and I know from experience that nothing can weigh more heavily on your mind than the health of your

child. The slightest cough, the most minor accident can cause enormous worry. I can barely imagine what it would be like to also have to worry about finding the money to pay for your children's health care in the first place.

Too many parents live with these worries every day. Millions of our fellow Americans—people who are dedicated citizens, people who get up every day and go to work, people who pay the taxes they owe to the Government, people who do everything that is expected of them and still have to worry about the health care of their children for lack of insurance coverage. This is wrong. If we really want to make America strong for the 21st century, we will correct it. We have the tools; it is now up to us to use them.

Thank you very much, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:43 p.m. in the atrium at Children's Hospital. In his remarks, he referred to Linda Haverman, mother of two boys who have received health insurance through Medicaid, who introduced the President; Ned Zechman, president, Children's Hospital; Mayor Marion Barry of the District of Columbia; and Raymond C. Scheppach, executive director, National Governors' Association.

## **Memorandum on Children's Health Insurance Outreach**

*February 18, 1998*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Education, the Commissioner of Social Security*

*Subject: Children's Health Insurance Outreach*

Over 10 million of our Nation's children are currently uninsured and, as a consequence, often cannot afford much-needed health care services such as doctor visits, prescription drugs, or hospital care. Last year, with bipartisan support, we took a major step toward solving this problem. The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 that I signed into law

enacted the largest single expansion of children's health insurance in 30 years. The new Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides \$24 billion over 5 years to cover millions of uninsured children in working families. It builds on the Medicaid program, which currently covers nearly 20 million poor children across the country.

We now face the serious task of enrolling uninsured children in both Medicaid and State-administered children's health programs. We know that well over 3 million uninsured children are eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid. This is largely due to a lack of knowledge about Medicaid eligibility and the difficulty of the enrollment process. These same problems could limit the potential of CHIP to successfully enroll millions of uninsured children.

To ensure that both Medicaid and CHIP fulfill their potential, I am calling for a nationwide children's health insurance outreach initiative involving both the private and public sectors. As illustrated by my announcement today, foundations, corporations, health care providers, consumer advocates, and others in the private sector are already responding to our challenge to make every effort to enroll uninsured children in Medicaid or CHIP. In the public sector, my FY 1999 budget proposal includes policies to give States the flexibility and funding they need to conduct innovative outreach activities. The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) should continue their focused efforts to promote outreach through administrative actions.

There is clearly more that the Federal Government can do to help the States and the private sector achieve our mutual goal of targeting and providing coverage to uninsured children. Many children who lack health insurance are the same children who benefit from programs your agency now administers. Eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP is often similar to that for WIC, Food Stamps, Head Start, tax programs, job training, welfare to work, Social Security, public housing, and homelessness initiatives. Thus, a coordinated Federal interagency effort is critical to providing greater health care coverage for children.

Therefore, to increase enrollment of uninsured children in Medicaid and CHIP, I hereby direct you to take the following actions consistent with the mission of your agency. First, I direct you to identify all of the employees and grantees of your agency's programs who work with low-income, uninsured children who may be eligible for Medicaid or CHIP.

Second, I direct you to develop and implement an educational strategy aimed at ensuring that your agency's employees and grantees are fully informed about the availability of Medicaid and CHIP to our Nation's children.

Third, I direct you to develop an agency-specific plan as part of our Administration-wide, intensive children's health insurance outreach effort. Your agency's plan should include distributing information and educating families about their options; coordinating toll-free numbers and other sources of information on public programs; simplifying, coordinating, and, where possible, unifying the application process for related public programs; and working with State and local agencies on broadening the locations where families can apply for Medicaid and/or CHIP.

Fourth, I direct you to identify any statutory or regulatory impediments in your programs to conducting children's health insurance coverage outreach.

Finally, I direct the Department of Health and Human Services to serve as the coordinating agency to assist in the development and integration of agency plans and to report back to me on each agency's plan in 90 days with recommendations and a suggested implementation timetable. In so doing, I direct the Department to ensure that Federal interagency activities are complementary, aggressive, and consistent with the overall initiative to cover uninsured children.

**William J. Clinton**

**Remarks at a Reception for  
Representative James P. Moran  
February 18, 1998**

Thank you very much. First let me join I know all of you in thanking Dr. D'Orta for